

## **BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, May 20, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Deputy Mayor Gamble, Councilors Hypolite, Neuwirth, DeLorenzo and Rivers

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Thom Hooper and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Guests were: Chief Robert Farmer – Blue Hills Fire District, Vincent Jaunai, Community Outreach Officer (Blue Hills Fire) and Dr. Shawn Council, Esq.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Discussion regarding the South End of Blue Hills Avenue Corridor (near city line)**

Mr. Thom Hooper, Director of Planning gave a brief background regarding street scape improvements on the Hartford/Bloomfield city line and State of Connecticut funding.

Approximately \$127,000 is available in the program account to be repurposed to do designs for sidewalks, curbing, streetscape, landscaping, lighting, etc.

There was a recent Tax Sale of the VFW property. The owners of the property have 6 months to redeem or the recommendation to the new owner is to demolition the building.

Mr. Mike Kosilla, Zoning Officer for the town has been working through the court process to take action on three blighted properties on Blue Hills Avenue.

Dr. Council stated that the new owner would like to have either a supper inquired club or a banquet facility in the area. Dr. Council also inquired about town assistance with the demolition process for this property.

Deputy Mayor Gamble stated that there are definitely needs of improvement for this area of town. She inquired about the status update of the old drive in theatre, bought by Mr. Richard Tulle. There are preliminary plans to possibly redevelop the area for a box store, i.e. – Walmart or Costco.

Chief Farmer expressed concerns regarding abandoned properties that are accumulating in the area. He informed the committee of his continued participation of the Blue Hills Fire District in any efforts to revitalize this area.

Councilor Hypolite inquired about the Small Cities grant used funding for Housing Rehabilitation Program.

There was an allocation of \$500,000, of that amount \$250,000 was not distributed to the town. There may be a possibility to obtain those funds from the State. At present, there is approximately a balance of \$127,000 in the Facade Loan program account with the possibility of a second round of State Funding. Mr. Hooper reiterated the importance of the State to give authority to repurpose funding.

The town will continue to pursue additional grant funds under the Small Cities Program. Councilor Hypolite also expressed that the focus should be on the overall corridor, instead of individual properties with owners.

Mr. Schenck, Jr., stated that regulatory issues with existing grant funds must be evaluated.

A consult with Department of Transportation is needed because Blue Hills Avenue is state road.

Deputy Mayor Gamble would like to focus on entire Blue Hills Avenue strip and demolish the inhabitable and abandoned properties due to public safety.

In addition to these suggestions and efforts a plan of action should be developed to address the needs of the community.

Councilor Neuwirth recommended additional research to proceed with cleanup of this area of town.

### **Old Business**

Councilor Hypolite inquired about the status update of J.P. Vincent School and CREC.

It was noted that site plan and wetlands approval were reviewed by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission. On July 31, 2014 the purchase and sale agreement will be finalized.

The town was given the option to remove kitchen equipment and monuments from the building, as well as granite benches on the grounds.

CREC will be responsible for plowing and maintaining the ride a way behind the school.

Attorney Council inquired about the funding balance of \$127,000 from the initial façade program. It was noted that these funds were spent on other design and architectural plans.

### **Discussion regarding the Tax Abatement Agreement for S & T Holdings**

S & T Holding (Machinist Industry) is requesting tax abatement for a \$6,000 square foot addition to its current building. This abatement would be for a three year period at 50%. The company plans to expand their personnel by 15 to 25 individuals over the next 5 years.

**It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to refer this item for full Council approval of tax abatement proposal with S & T Holding.**

Mr. Hooper also mentioned that there is a verbal agreement between the Town authorizing the Town Manager to negotiate small abatements for companies. However, it was suggested that the current tax incentive policy adopted by the town in November 2002; should be reviewed and possibly developed into a standard operating procedures regarding all tax abatements.

**It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to create Standard Operating procedures on all tax abatements.**

### **New Business**

Mr. Hooper requested approval for a grant application to install street sidewalks near the town center.

**It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to refer this Resolution to the full Town Council for approval to authorize the Main Street Investment grant application for street sidewalks.**

Mr. Hooper presented the final proof of the “Welcome to Bloomfield” sign to committee members. The sign will be placed at the northwest corner intersection of Blue Hills Avenue & Cottage Grove Road.

Deputy Mayor Gamble stated that this item does not need to go to full Council approval.

However, it was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to approve the proof of the “Welcome to Bloomfield” sign as presented to the Land Use & Economic Development committee.

Public Comment – Dr. Shawn Council, Esq. expressed concerns regarding the monetary donation given to the college student who designed the “Welcome to Bloomfield” sign.

Deputy Mayor Gamble stated that aside from the monetary donation, the town encourages a working relationship between the University of Hartford student population and the community.

## **Adjournment**

It was moved by Councilor Neuwirth, seconded Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.